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ABSTRACT

Higher education governance in Yugoslavia is described, and comparisons are made to the United States. Major differences between the countries are reflected in three areas: physical facilities, internal relations, and external relations. In the main, physical facilities at Yugoslav faculties are well-developed and maintained, despite the fact that this is not an affluent nation. Communications among individual faculties are conducted through the office of the president of the university, which has limited authority and tends to coordinate the loose confederation of individual faculties. The faculty, which is a powerful and independent entity, has authority to conduct activities that would be entrusted to top administrators at U.S. colleges. Individual deans have considerably less power than in the United States. Students enrolled in one faculty take all their courses there (i.e., a faculty of economics includes professors from other disciplines). Further information is provided on: budgeting for faculties, the selection of new professors, teaching loads, the council decision-making process, and time commitments to faculty meetings. (SW)

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HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE IN YUGOSLAVIA:
A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE IN YUGOSLAVIA: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Even a casual examination of Yugoslav Universities and their component colleges (faculties) reveals that they are similar in many ways to their counterparts in the United States. Many arts, sciences, engineering and business curricula, for instance, do not differ substantially from common modes in the United States. On the other hand there are significant differences, especially in the field of university governance. In turn, some of the more evident and far-reaching differences are reflected in three areas: (1) physical facilities, (2) internal relations, and (3) external relations.

Physical Facilities

At present, Yugoslavia has seven Universities, 17 advanced schools (of University rank), 14 academies for the arts, and 139 higher school (teacher training colleges, commercial colleges, etc.). One measure of size - the average number of annual graduates - approximates 18,000 - in a country whose population is roughly twenty-one million. It is evident, based upon this magnitude alone, that public policy dictates a high priority for institutions of higher education. Few other nations in Eastern and Western Europe make higher education facilities and resources available for such a high percentage of their citizens.

The Yugoslav University is similar to its West-European counterpart, in that commonly, each faculty (college) is housed in a separate site (building or complex of buildings). Often, the separate faculties are geographically dispersed. Thus, at the University of Nis, the Faculty of

Philosophy and the Faculty of Medicine are situated in opposite ends of the city, while the Faculty of Economics (including both business and economics) is located at a point in between these two. Interestingly, the geographic dispersion has not created severe problems of university coordination since each faculty operates in what is essentially an independent manner. In fact, most administrators are of the opinion that closer physical proximity would have only a minimal impact on the operations and success of the separate faculties.

In the main, physical facilities at Yugoslav faculties are well-developed and maintained, despite the fact that this is not an affluent nation. Many of the buildings are relatively new and witness modern architectural patterns and contain up to date furniture, fixtures, and equipment. Where older buildings are used they tend to be in a state of good repair. Mixtures of traditional and modern facilities are evident at some institutions, of course. An example is the University of Sarajevo, where the administration has attempted to construct buildings and classrooms that reflect traditional cultures, in a setting that includes a number of older buildings.

External Relations

Individual faculties carry out official communications with each other, when this is necessary, through the office of the President of the University. The latter has very limited authority, with no substantial voice in such matters as allocations of funds to faculties, recruiting and selection of instructors, curriculum, and faculty organization. Rather, he or she coordinates the loose confederation of individual faculties, attempts to resolve differences between them, serves as a liaison with governmental officials, represents the University at large in dealing with

outside agencies such as the press, and is involved in undertaking University public relations work. Contacts between individual Faculties and the President are maintained by the Deans of the faculties, much in the same manner as in the United States.

Some all - University committees are "public relations" and "overall planning," which attempts to formulate University mission strategies, and policies. Each faculty elects one or more representatives to such bodies. The latter operate in an advisory capacity, only, and are not viewed by professors as sources of substantial power. In fact, many professors vigorously avoid election to all - University committees - viewing them as unproductive and unduly time consuming.

In some cities, such as Titograd, the individual faculties have not united into a University. Rather, each operates entirely as a separate institution - devoid even of the loose confederation arrangement described above. Experience has indicated to the Yugoslavs that such an arrangement allows the faculty to develop its curriculum, physical facilities, and other structures in an autonomous manner that is absolutely unhindered by many of the problems which all - university structures in other nations impose.

Internal Relations

Internal (within the faculty) relations are very important, since, in essence, each faculty is a powerful and independent entity - with the power to withdraw from the University, if desired by a majority of the staff. In addition, the disciplines represented in each Faculty are heterogeneous, posing threats of internal faculty strife, should the atmosphere not be composed of striving toward common goals and internal cooperation. Further, the Faculty has the authority to conduct numerous activities and

make decisions that are entrusted to top level administrators in the United States college and Universities.

As in the United States, deans head each Faculty. However, in Yugoslavia the individual deans' power and authority is considerably less than in this country. Basically, their duties involve representing the faculty in contacts with other institutions and government agencies, implementing policies adopted by the Faculty, presiding over meetings, and proposing plans, policies, and procedures - which the faculty can readily accept or reject. Many individuals hold their dean status for only very limited (1-2 year) periods of time. Competition among Faculty for deans positions is seldom intense. In fact, some Faculties have experienced difficulty in generating sufficient numbers of candidates for deans positions, to satisfy their recruiting goals.

Decisions such as those involving capital budgeting, allocating Faculty positions to colleges, curriculum modification, promotions, and pay increases are made by a council made up of all professors in the Faculty. It is said that no one individual (including the dean) exercises institutionally imposed power - the source of power is in the group. Even decisions such as which students are to receive teaching and research assistantships are made by the Faculty at large, after prolonged deliberation.

With respect to course offerings, each Faculty is self-contained, that is, students enrolled in one Faculty take all of their courses there. Thus, a Faculty of economics includes professors of mathematics, foreign language, humanities, social sciences, and physical science, in addition to economics. This arrangement is a natural consequence of the desire to operate each Faculty in an autonomous manner. The concept of all-university service courses has not been implemented, as it has in the United

States. Autonomy is preferred, even though it results in considerable duplication of disciplines across Faculties.

Each Faculty receives its budget allocation in a lump sum on an annual basis from governmental authorities. The allocation of funds to various end uses such as salaries, capital equipment, supplies, etc., is undertaken by the council of professors. These individuals, acting as a group have the power to grant increases in salary to some or all professors at the expense of reduced funding for capital, or vice-versa. The budget, then, is very flexible - certainly not line - item. The source of funds is in the provincial (state) government, rather than Belgrade, reflecting the desire of Yugoslavs to decentralize decision making as much as national policy permits. Other East European countries tend to allocate budgets at a central level - as is the case in Bulgaria and Romania.

As was mentioned earlier, the selection of new professors is undertaken by the Faculty council and is a very comprehensive process mainly focusing on research and publishing potential and output. The council also evaluates the progress of each existing instructor every five years. Again, the evaluation emphasizes research and writing, rather than teaching and service accomplishments. The evaluation can lead to promotion, demotion, maintenance of status quo or dismissal. In the main, heavy reliance is placed upon the referred journal and book publishing record of the professor. Student evaluations of professors are not utilized, although some institutions are experimenting with student and peer evaluations of teaching. The most widely used teaching effectiveness evaluation device is to monitor student performance on comprehensive final examinations.

As compared to the United States - teaching loads in Yugoslav Faculties are not heavy - most professors teach 3, and a few 6, hours per week. Normally classes (called lectures) are held on a one day per week on a 3

hour session basis. Frequently, professors rely upon guest lecturers from other Universities and from governmental or business organizations.

Evaluation

Certainly higher education processes and institutions in Yugoslavia differ from those in the United States, in many respects. Yugoslav professors, in general, disagree regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the group (council) decision making process. Most regard this activity as a valuable mechanism for the maintenance of self governance and the avoidance of arbitrary and self seeking one person or elitist group rule. Yet, many grow weary of and disenchanted with the frequent council meetings - which sometimes consume as much as 16 hours per week. This time drain, of course, is partially offset by the moderate teaching loads. The latter are defended on the basis of quality - many Yugoslav professors cannot imagine quality teaching when professors have 9 or 12 hour teaching loads - as in numerous schools in the United States.

Since each Faculty is self contained, some duplication of personnel in various disciplines exists. Thus each Faculty in the University employs instructors in basic fields - foreign language, social science, etc., in addition to specialists in its own discipline. The rationale for the duplication is that it permits Faculty to specialize - to orient their teaching efforts to the specific needs of students enrolled in that particular Faculty. Hence, a mathematics teacher situated in the Faculty of Economics tends to orient his or her teaching toward the solution of problems confronting business, while his or her counterpart in the Faculty of Science is more likely to focus upon theorems and proofs. The autonomous operation of the Faculties, then, tends to increase total costs because of duplication of disciplines, but does permit each Faculty to specialize in

serving its parent discipline.

The major output of the system of higher education - the graduates - are believed by most Yugoslav authorities and educators in other countries to be high in quality. Indeed, some schools, as in medicine, have reputations that permit them to draw numerous students from other countries, including developed nations. Conversely, graduates in various fields, such as economics and the physical sciences, have a background of knowledge judged to be adequate but several years behind those of neighboring Austria, West Germany, and Switzerland. Overall, Yugoslav graduates are reasonably successful in competing for the more attractive positions in international business firms.

The research output of Yugoslav professors is substantial and growing at an impressive pace. Much of the creative activity is devoted to writing textbooks, as this is heavily rewarded by the administration. This orientation probably inhibits the production of conference papers, manuscripts for referred journals, and grant proposals. Nevertheless, Yugoslav professors have an impressive record of scholarly works, both in journals published in the country and those emanating elsewhere. It appears that the textbook bias has not severely inhibited scholarly research endeavors.

Yugoslav professors devote much of their service efforts to attendance at Faculty meetings. These consume substantial volumes of time, meaning that professors cannot engage in what United States professors commonly call service work. Hence, service is not a strongpoint of the Yugoslav system.

The low teaching loads of Faculty members has essentially been compensated for by increasing class sizes above levels that might be considered as optimal. Administrators faced with the need to keep teaching loads

small, in accordance with established procedures have raised class-size limits on a steady basis, as enrollments have grown over the past decade. The result according to most observers has been a decline in the quality of instruction. The administrators have, however, resisted the temptation to assign classes to teaching assistants, as many United States schools have. To the contrary, Yugoslav classes are taught only by professors.

In general, the morale of professors at the University is high. Substantial turnover, and absenteeism are not in evidence. Professors receive an income that is well above the national average for managerial and professional positions. Further, their prestige and social status is on a high plane, as higher education is held in substantial respect in the country. Many instructors evidence an opinion that they are accomplishing worthwhile work and are contributing to the needs of their country and province, suggesting that they are accomplishing self actualization needs.